

For my dear Jean Macferson
with very good wish for
Christmas
1918

A.O.S.

The
Story of the Masterpieces.

By

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NOTE.

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I.


THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION.

Bright angels are around thee ;
They that have served thee from thy birth are there ;
Their hands with stars have crowned thee ;
Thou, peerless queen of Air,
As sandals to thy feet the silver moon dost wear.

—*Longfellow.*



I.

 IN the great collection of the Louvre the picture which attracts most attention, and before which one is always sure of finding a reverent and loving host, is the so-called "Immaculate Conception" of Murillo. It represents a slight, girlish figure of the most delicate grace and beauty, soaring upward upon clouds, the moon under her feet, and around her groups of adoring and adorable cherubs. The figure is draped in robe of white, the sheen of which is enhanced by the rich blue of the mantle, upon which, also, the flesh-tints of the folded hands display themselves in wonderful perfection. The face is luminous, the eyes drawn heavenward, the whole expression one of stainless innocence and holy rapture. One might be pardoned for indulging sentiment over a vision so winsome and ravishing—

"Thee! standing loveliest in the open heaven,
Ave Maria! Only heaven and thee."

The theme was one which frequently employed Murillo's pencil, and one in which his whole nature delighted. The controversy about the Virgin's pecu-

liar relations to the divine and human nature which, in the earlier centuries, found art expression in the group of the Virgin and Child, in the seventeenth century found expression (because of the changed issue in the controversy) in the single figure of the Virgin, who thus became in the popular mind more than ever an object of worship. And it is interesting, as exhibiting the connection between art and the development of doctrine, that this representation of the Virgin as a solitary divinity was characteristic of the seventeenth century, when the controversy about her predestined sanctification had reached its climax and had virtually become an accepted article of faith.

There can be no doubt that Murillo's intense religionism gave him mastery in this particular branch of his art. Critics have noticed that where his compositions involved the Mother as one of a group, the features and expression are altogether human, and even Spanish; but in the class of pictures where the design is to represent the Mother under the influence of the stupendous revelation that her Son is indeed to be the Messiah, the features and expression are pervaded by a glow and enthusiasm which, perhaps, no other painter ever attained. Of Murillo's own devotion to this particular item of the faith there is an interesting glimpse in the rules prescribed for the students of art in the

academy of which he was founder. One of these forbade swearing and ill-behavior, and required assent to the following: "Praised be the most holy sacrament and the immaculate conception of our Lady!"

The "Immaculate Conception," which the Louvre now possesses, was taken from Spain by Marshal Soult during the Napoleonic campaigns, and purchased from the Marshal's collection for \$123,000, in 1852. It was painted by Murillo for a hospital for aged priests in Seville, being finished by the master during the supremacy of his third, last, and most characteristic style, in 1678. It is ranked, even by critics who have small sympathy for the theme, as one of the most beautiful creations of the Spanish school and the glory of seventeenth-century art. It ought to be said, however, by way of warning to those who are timid about enjoying anything which the critics deplore, that one of the most eminent of this craft in our day refers to this very picture as an illustration of the general position that Murillo's "ecstasies of Madonnas and saints . . . neither raise the mind nor seize upon the imagination; but they stimulate sluggish perceptions and lukewarm devoteism, and are accepted as ravishingly pious by mobs of the fashionable and the unfashionable."

Murillo's life has the same element of other-worldly

charm which he has communicated to his work. He was born in Seville on New-Year's day, 1618, or at least he was baptized then. His parents were poor, and the young Bartolome Esteban struggled against poverty for thirty years of his life. An uncle taught him the rudiments of painting in a studio scant of every appliance, and almost never cheered by living model. For bread the young artist would paint saints and virgins on scraps of linen, to be sold to the peasants who came up annually to the great fair in Seville. The principal reward of this was a gain in manual dexterity. One wonders how Murillo, under such stress, could ever have given the world his inimitable groups of beggar urchins with their plumpness, invincible cheerfulness, and genial atmosphere of unwashed prosperity. A friend, reciting his adventures in foreign parts, inflamed Murillo with a desire to see the famous art-centers of Italy and the Netherlands. A sheet of linen was bought, ardent saints and ecstatic virgins were forthwith embellished, and a sale made to certain owners of trading-vessels, who considered the paintings marketable among the pious in far-off colonies. With the proceeds of this venture Murillo set out for Madrid, and presented himself to Velasquez, then at the summit of his fame. The elder looked upon and loved the younger artist, received

him into his own home, and procured for him admission to the royal collections, and permission to copy the masterpieces of Titian, Rubens, and Van Dyck.

Three years later Murillo returned to Seville. He was still poor, but only twenty-seven. The monastery of St. Francis was to be decorated. No artist of repute would touch the work for the sum the monks proposed to pay. Murillo offered his service, and was accepted. He fulfilled his contract, and awoke to find himself famous. Commissions poured in upon him. While at work upon an altar-piece his fancy was taken by a worshiper, to whom he made love by portraying her in the composition as an angel. By her he acquired added wealth and social position. His home became the resort of Spain's most renowned sons and daughters. The city idolized him; his fellow-artists, jealous of each other, submitted to his gentle and gracious authority. He achieved what others, and even royalty itself, had undertaken in vain—the establishment of an art academy—and he died at sixty-four, honored and lamented by the whole nation. No one could help loving the man who, as one of his biographers says, was “so generous that he gave all he earned to the poor; so diligent at his work that he had no time for evil-speaking; and with so

much tact and sweetness and vital piety that he left no shadow upon his name."

Murillo's pictures are characteristically refined and beautiful, pure and chaste. It has even been observed that in representations of the Virgin he always arranges the drapery to cover her feet, as if even so slight a symptom of coquetry as their display were inconsistent with the high dignity of the subject. In his studies of low life he is also reserved in the interest of refinement and delicacy. Such scenes as are characteristic, for instance, of the Flemish and Dutch schools, scenes of squalor and revelry, Murillo never attempted. Nevertheless, he is the artist annalist of the poor. He did for Spanish beggards what Velasquez did for Spanish grandeeism, and with equal skill and power. Coming from their ranks, he never forgot the poor, and for them, as for the highest in the land, he had the most distinguished consideration and the most winning temper. For the cook of a monastery, who became attached to him and who desired a keepsake, he painted on a napkin a virgin and child of most exquisite model and color.

It may not be without significance that his humble origin, his long struggle with poverty, and his ready and continued sympathy with the poor were no obstacles in his way to the respect, confidence, and

friendship of the noblest families of the most exclusive nation on earth. Was it because his own life was transfigured? For he was, indeed, a man "with all the chords of his fine nature touched by the Holy Ghost." Moritz Retzsch had the picture of a beautiful angel constantly in sight to cheer away despondency. Murillo had daily commerce with the unseen. Asked why he lingered so long before Campana's "Descent from the Cross," the gentle mystic replied, "I am waiting till they bring the body of our blessed Lord down the ladder." The body did not come, but the Spirit did; and Murillo bore the seal of this nobility which gave him access to all ranks.

II.

THE ADORATION OF THE SHEPHERDS.

7.

Art Thou, weak Babe, my very God?
O, I must love Thee then,—
Love Thee, and yearn to spread Thy love
Among forgetful men.


—*F. W. Faber.*

Now let us all, with gladsome cheer,
Follow the shepherds, and draw near,
To see this wondrous gift of God
Who hath his only Son bestowed.

—*Martin Luther.*



II.

HE Gospel narrative of the visit of the shepherds to the scene of the Nativity is brief and simple: "And they came with haste and found both Mary and Joseph, and the babe lying in the manger." (Luke ii, 16.) The "Apocryphal Gospel of the Infancy," with that infinite relish for small gossip which marks its world-wide separation from genuine inspiration, relates the search of Joseph for a midwife, and his return to the cave, which he finds "all filled with lights greater than the light of lamps and candles, and greater than the light of the sun itself." It is this latter account which Correggio follows in "The Holy Night," and which in his rendering has become immortal. It may have been, with the artist, a purely mechanical and technical device. To the spectator, however, the Babe, as the center and source of light, is not simply an artistic marvel, but a spiritual suggestion of first and abounding import. Not only upon mother and shepherd and impending angel does the light shine, but upon every heart which is in the gloom of sin and darkness of passion; and to

every soul which has groped in the bewildering shadow of doubt or in the blackness of unbelief, the Babe of Bethlehem has been a veritable fountain of light, a promise of hope and strength, of ultimate triumph, and of abiding joy.

Correggio's distinction in art rests largely upon his extraordinary manipulation of light and his representation of the human body in action—technically his gift in *chiaroscuro* and in foreshortening. Both qualities are admirably illustrated in the accompanying illustration; the latter in the angel at the extreme left, who looks as if he might actually leap out of the picture; the former in the distribution of light from the Babe in the center, from whom, in a marked progression, it deepens down through the subtlest gradations to the darkest shadows, which are themselves luminous. Never was light so deftly and melodiously pervasive; never shadow so varied or so gracious.

The spirit of the scene—that of rapture and joyous emotion—is highly characteristic. Correggio's nature was essentially sunny and beauty-loving. To him distress and anguish were abhorrent; he treats them, when necessary, in summary fashion. But the incidents of the Nativity are all congenial. The mother here is human and charming, as are all the Madonnas of Correggio's creation. She may lack dignity and

the chrism of other-worldliness, but she is an adoring and adorable mother. She is wholly rapt up in the child; she is absorbed in him; he is her world. The reverent awe of the elder shepherd, who is removing his cap, is enhanced by the rapturous expression of his young companion, who manifestly hears the song of the angels. The woman shielding her eyes from the dazzling light may be the midwife or a shepherdess, and from the basket in her hand peep forth two turtle-doves, the customary gift for the presentation of the child in the temple. The joy of the whole creation is symbolized in the alert gaze of the dog in the foreground; in the ass which, despite Joseph's exertions, is craning his neck to look at the light; and in the ox struggling in the hands of two maidens, who, apparently, can control neither their charge nor their curiosity. The angels are a vision of beauty. Some of the group are but children, and illustrate that incomparable gift of the master in depicting the grace and innocence of childhood which, soon after his time, caused the palaces and churches of half Europe to be invaded by the laughing infant hordes of more or less successful imitators. Even nature herself contributes to the power and beauty of the scene. The sky,

"Dark blue, a deep space overhead,
Distinct with vivid stars inlaid,"

is just catching the tints of the morning, and the rims of the hills in the distance are bright with the investiture of the sun's rising glory. One can almost feel the breath of the "dew-impearled" winds, which, kissing grass and flower and tree into newness of life and fragrance and beauty, bring the tribute of earth to her rightful Master and King. That the shepherds worshiped is not a marvel; nor that they should exultingly recite to their comrades what they had seen:

"We saw thee in thy balmy nest,
Young dawn of our eternal day;
We saw thine eyes break from the east
And chase the trembling shades away;
We saw thee, and we blest the sight;
We saw thee by thine own sweet light."

The thrill of their exultation has passed into many a human heart since, and always with the same result—the desire to spread the fame of God's love and the incommunicable glory of the vision of Christ.

The external history of the picture is not without a flavor of romance. It was ordered by a certain Albert Pratoneri for the altar of his chapel in the church of San Prospero at Reggio. For a representation of the "Nativity," done "with the utmost skill," he promised, and doubtless paid, 208 pounds of the old Reggian currency. The contract was signed in 1522; the picture was not finished, however, till 1530.

Its beauty tempted the cupidity of the Este family, who, failing in 1587 to secure it by diplomacy, made it, in the next century, the special object of a robber raid, and took it by force to their court in Modena. When the fortunes of this family were desperate, Augustus of Saxony, in 1746, made an offer for the gems of their art collection, and this Correggio, with other treasures, was taken to Dresden, where it is now to be seen.

The artist himself had, until within a comparatively recent time, a history so romantic that it furnished a German playwright with materials for a tragedy. According to the old chroniclers, Correggio was born in poverty, worked in poverty, and died in poverty. A surly patron once paid him in copper, the carrying home of which in the heat of the sun induced the artist's death. Recent criticism denies all this in the most conclusive and matter-of-fact manner. It is of Correggio, too, the familiar story is told that, upon seeing Raphael's "St. Cecilia," in Bologna, he exclaimed, "I, too, am an artist!" The originator of this story connects the remark with a visit of Correggio's to Bologna in 1515, at which time the picture was certainly not in Bologna, if, indeed, it was in existence at all.

Few Italian artists of the Renaissance are known

by their real names. Tintoretto, Masaccio, Guercino, Giorgione, and Domenichino are nicknames; Correggio, Perugino, Giulio Romano, and Giovanni da Bologna are named from the place of their birth. Correggio's name was Antonio Allegri, and he was born at Correggio in the Duchy of Milan, in 1494. His father was a tradesman in comfortable circumstances, and Antonio had an uncle for one of his early instructors in art. From his earliest venture he seems to have been appreciated. That he was a favorite at the Court of Modena there is indubitable evidence, and that he learned and practiced his art under the most favorable circumstances is quite as certain. At the time of his death, in 1534, he was able to leave a handsome competence to his children. So far from being a series of petty tragedies, Correggio's life appears to have been one of commonplace felicity and snug prosperity. He was modest, which kept him apart from the rivalry of schools and the strife of tongues; he was single-hearted in his work, and that kept him busy in his own way, enabling him to do as much in his comparatively short term of life as others achieved by length of days. If he had not the many-sidedness of Leonardo or Michael Angelo, he used his simpler gifts to the utmost, and the heritage of his work is one of the world's richest treasures of loveli-

ness. A brother artist declared that an Adam drawn by Michael Angelo and painted by Titian, and an Eve drawn by Raphael and painted by Correggio, would secure the two finest pictures the world has ever known.

III.

THE SISTINE MADONNA


Who so above all mothers shone
The Mother of the Blessed One.

The Mother, with the Child,
Whose tender winning arts
Have to His little arms beguiled
So many wounded hearts.

—*Matthew Arnold.*



III.

NE does not naturally associate the vehemence and passion of theological controversy with the beauty and serenity of art; but the two are intimately connected in the case of the Virgin Mary, who, with the Christ, constitutes the principal figure in by far the most important and most beautiful portion of modern artistic production.

The strain of woman-worship, which Gentile Christianity inherited from a long lineage of pagan ancestors, would naturally be quick to suggest special honor and reverence to the mother of our Lord. Prior to the fourth century this instinct found expression only in an appropriate and innocent festival which the Virgin enjoyed in common with other saints. During the fifth century, however, in the reaction against Arianism (which emphasized the human nature of Christ), the divine nature of Christ was insisted upon to the subordination of any thought about his human nature; and so among the common people, not particular about metaphysical distinctions, Mary became

"Mother of God" and an object of worship. Then came what is known as the Nestorian controversy. The Nestorians maintained that the divine and human natures in Christ were separate, and that Mary was mother of the human, and not of the divine. The opposition, called the Monophysite party, maintained that the human and divine were so blended in the Incarnation that Mary was in a very real sense Mother of God. The Council of Ephesus, in 431, decided with the latter, and as one result the "Madonna and Child," the favorite topic of modern art, became the expression of the orthodox faith.

The progress of Virgin-worship from this time was almost uninterrupted. In the seventh century, we are told, popes and saints vied with each other in doing homage to her name. Among her ardent worshipers were St. Francis, St. Dominic, and St. Thomas Aquinas, organizers and evangelists of the most distinguished character and gifts, whose influence was paramount in the Church and with the people; so that by the fifteenth century, the time with which we are immediately concerned, the Virgin had virtually been accorded a place in the Godhead, invested with divine attributes and acts of grace, and shared with the Father and the Son the adoring worship of the faithful. The prominence thus given in the popular mind

to the worship of the Virgin had the effect of making the Madonna a sort of test subject, in which the artist challenged comparison, not only with himself and with his contemporaries, but with the past. For, as Gruyer says, "Raphael's Virgins are the sovereign expression of a religious idea incessantly pursued, not only during the two centuries of the Renaissance (the fourteenth and fifteenth), but also by all the Christian generations from the Catacombs to Giotto."

The Sistine Madonna of Raphael in the Dresden Gallery is not only the artist's supreme creation, but, in the judgment of the most discerning and best informed critics, it is the most beautiful picture in the world. It is a common experience for the visitor to find himself on his way to this picture in an unwonted tumult of expectancy not wholly unmingled with dread. He will even walk with an aggressive air of deliberation through the rooms which stand between him and the object of his desire, looking at everything but seeing nothing, toying with anticipation until desire becomes pain; then in sheer abandonment confronting the canvas out of which look upon him two faces, the memory of which will forever after sweeten all the springs of living. The spell of the picture is felt at once. Its loveliness is sacramental,

like the loveliness of the summer dawn. "One looks, and his heart is in heaven."

The critics place this Madonna in Raphael's latest or Roman period (1508-1520). It was painted for the altar of the Black Friars' monastery of San Sisto (whence the distinguishing name of the picture) in Piacenza, Italy. It is said to have been completed by the artist in three months; to have been done entirely by his own hand, and, as no drawing is known to exist, to have been an inspiration. These stories can not be vouched for; but one has an uncritical satisfaction in accumulating wonders about so perfect a piece of work. The composition is simple. In the center is the Virgin, "the divinest image that ever shaped itself in palpable hues and forms to the living eye." Erect she stands upon moving clouds, clad in blue mantle, red tunic, and flowing veil, while in her arms is throned the Child, "whose lofty mission is foreshadowed in his childish features, the depth and majesty of whose eyes express his destiny as the Redeemer of the world." At the left kneels Pope Sixtus II (the patron saint of the monastery for which the picture was intended), bearded, bald, and wrinkled, clad sumptuously in white surplice and yellow stole, and "evidently pleading, in all the combined fervor of faith, hope, and charity, for the con-

gregation of sinners who are supposed to be kneeling before the picture, and to whom he points." At the right kneels Saint Barbara, patroness of theological learning, whose symbol, the tower, is just descried in the background at her right. Below are two cherubs, "with their upward look of rapture and wonder, blending the most childish innocence with a sublime inspiration;" and to the extreme left the pope's tiara. A curtain of green silk strung upon rope, and looped at the sides, incloses the whole; and, through this, one looks into the illimitable ether out of which innumerable cherubic faces come "faint and less faint" to view—a tender suggestion, perhaps, of the nearness and reality of the invisible world, out of whose heart the Christ child had come, and whose inhabitants never grow old.

The picture was brought to Dresden in 1753. Forty years before, Augustus III, of Saxony, at that time crown prince, was making a tour of Italy, and, seeing the picture, coveted it. After years of diplomatic negotiation as delicate and difficult to conclude as a treaty of peace, the monks were induced to sell their treasure for a sum equal to about 45,000 American dollars, and a duplicate copy of the picture which now adorns the monastery altar, and is exhibited to this day as the original. To those curi-

ous about such things it will be of interest to know that less than twenty years ago a genuine but somewhat ordinary Murillo was bought in Paris for \$123,000. To-day the Sistine Madonna is practically beyond money value. A pretty story is told in connection with the arrival of the picture at Dresden. When unboxed, it was taken directly to the throne-room, where, upon learning that the picture could be seen to the best advantage if placed where the throne stood, the king rather impatiently shoved the latter aside with his foot, saying, "Make way for the great Raphael!" Typical, perhaps, of the subsequent eclipse of the Saxon court! Augustus is forgotten; the glory of his court has passed away; a perpetual shadow lies upon the show and glitter of the old-time splendor; but all the world seeks to bless itself in a study of the matchless Raphael, which speaks to the human heart of God made man, that man might be brought to God, and whose ravishing and solemnizing beauty melts into the heart, to be among its fairest and fondest memories forever.

There are those who think that a painting that preaches or a story that moralizes represents a lower order of art for the preaching and moralizing. And no doubt a double motive may affect unity in composition—a fundamental requirement in good art.

But there is in the highest art a principle of subordination by which the two are combined to the enrichment of both; and a painting may preach, and preach all the more effectively that it excels as a painting, as in the case of the Sistine Madonna, whose hold upon the human heart lies not more in its utter loveliness than in its imperishable suggestion of Love. It is impossible to stand before so rich and beautiful an exposition of the Child Jesus and be insensible to its wealth of holy and subduing memories. And it is equally impossible to forget it,—

“The impress deepening with the gathering years,
Like some rich song, once heard, the soul forever hears.”

IV.

THE TRANSFIGURATION.

O wondrous type! O vision fair
Of glory that the Church shall share,
Which Christ upon the mountain shows,
Where brighter than the sun he glows!

From age to age the tale declare,
How with the three disciples there,
Where Moses and Elias meet,
The Lord holds converse high and sweet.

—*Sarum Breviary.*



IV.

RAPHAEL is one of the most interesting figures in the history of art. In beauty of person, in gentleness and sunniness of disposition, in grace of manner, in dignity and modesty of bearing, in the regal character of his genius and attainments, and in splendor of achievement, he is the most conspicuous and attractive personality in an age which was enriched by even such plenary characters as Leonardo and Michael Angelo, who were at once his masters and his rivals.

Raphael had an artist for father, and the art treasures of the Court of Urbino for the almost daily vision of his childhood. At eleven he was studying under Timoteo Viti, an artist of repute, and at sixteen he became a pupil of Perugino, whose manner he acquired so perfectly that several of the younger man's early works have been until recently uniformly attributed to the elder. At twenty-one Raphael is found in Florence, perfecting spirit and form by a study of the sculptors Michael Angelo, Donatello, and Ghiberti, getting new ideas of modeling from Leonardo, and

of drapery from Fra Bartolomeo. At twenty-five the fame of his work is the glory of Italy, and at thirty his intimates are the illustrious in literature, statecraft, and the Church. At thirty-seven he is dead—the darling of his time, and the wonder and admiration of all succeeding time. “He closed his first life,” says Pico della Mirandola, “at thirty-three (?); but the second, which is that of his renown, is subject to neither time nor death, and will be perpetual.”

The number of works produced by Raphael in seventeen years of actual work (estimated at 287 pictures and 526 drawings and studies) is all the more remarkable when we consider the sumptuous and ease-loving society of which he was the idol; and it indicates a steadiness of application and strength of purpose alike admirable and exceptional. That he had “facility,” a quality which, to some critics, seems a defect, is undoubted; and that he employed his scholars freely in work of his own is also beyond question; but if these are urged against Raphael’s application and industry, they establish nothing in the face of his studies, which show him to have been the most conscientious and painstaking of students.

“The Transfiguration” was Raphael’s last work, and was unfinished at the time of his death. The task of completing it was committed to his pupil,

Giulio Romano, whose work is said to predominate in the lower part of the picture. According to the common account, this work was begun by Raphael at the order of Cardinal Giulio de' Medici, in competition with Sebastian del Piombo, who chose, or was assigned, the "Raising of Lazarus." Sebastian is said to have been aided in his drawing by Michael Angelo, an interference which led Raphael to say good-naturedly, and perhaps not without a sense of triumph, "Michael Angelo has graciously favored me, in that he has deemed me worthy to compete with himself and not with Sebastian." Both pictures were destined for Giulio's provincial cathedral in Narbonne, but only Sebastian's was sent. Raphael's was consigned to the church of San Pietro in Montorio, in Rome, whence it was taken by the French, in 1797, to Paris. Upon its return to Rome it was placed in the Vatican, of which collection it is justly a chief treasure. Sebastian's picture is now in the National Gallery in London. There is no serious competition between the two, for Raphael's, in spite of the apparent lack of unity in composition and of Giulio Romano's inadequate handling, is one of the undoubted masterpieces of the sixteenth century.

The picture is in two parts—the upper representing the transfiguration of our Lord; the lower, the

demoniac lad brought to the disciples for healing. The attempt to combine two episodes in one picture is usually regarded as the violation of a fundamental canon of good art—unity of impression—and it is doubtful if a lesser genius than Raphael could have made it even tolerable. There are those who think the artist has not here vindicated his audacity. In theory the single impression may be indispensable; but here one is reminded of Beethoven, who, when told that a certain combination of chords was not allowable, replied calmly, "*I allow it.*" It is the privilege of high genius to be a law to itself. Goethe has a wise word about Raphael's conception in this picture: "How can the upper and lower parts be separated? Both are one; beneath is suffering craving for aid; above is active power and helpful grace." When we remember, too, that this was intended not for an historical but for a devotional picture, it is easy to see the justification of the artist in thus linking a helping Heaven with a needy humanity. The events follow each other immediately in the Scripture narrative (Matt. xvii; Mark ix; Luke ix), as if to remind devout readers that rapturous musings upon the beatific vision were intimately connected with the exercise of a practical and helpful ministry in common life.

The story of the picture is simple. Upon the summit of the hill are the three apostles, prostrate; above them in mid-air is the radiant form of Jesus, on either side of which are Moses (right) and Elias (left). Two figures, on the hill at the left, representing Saints Lawrence and Julian, were added to the group at the request of Raphael's patron, who sought thus to commemorate his father and uncle. In the lower part is the touching scene of the demoniac boy. The scene in general is perfectly intelligible, though some of the details have given rise to curious speculation. Goethe thinks, for instance, that the open book in the hands of the disciple points to an attempt to exorcise the demon by some form of incantation or prescription; and another critic finds in the presence of sticks of wood and a pool of water a symbol of the Scriptural detail, "For oftentimes he falleth into the fire, and oft into the water." There is no mistaking, however, the pregnant gesture of the disciple pointing upward, and thus connecting the two scenes. The source of help is above. If only Christ were here, the child would be saved. The uplifted, straining eyes, and heart-breaking anguish of the impotent parents, the deep concern and moving pity of the friends, are unutterably pathetic. They had hoped for human help, but human resources were not compe-

tent. For these poor, forlorn, and despondent hearts there was

"No help but prayer,
A breath that fleets beyond this iron world,
And touches him that made it."

Their cry was not in vain. God came down in person, and the child was healed.

The studies made by Raphael for this picture indicate the thought and care bestowed upon it. Without thinking of it as his last, Raphael was apparently determined to make it his supreme effort. The upper part of the picture is almost wholly his own, and the figure of Christ is conceded to be one of his noblest conceptions. Vasari touchingly suggests that Raphael so compressed his energy in the attempt to display the whole of the power and gifts of his art, and threw such perfection into the face of Christ that, having finished it, he seemed to say, "This is the last thing that I shall do in this world. I shall never again touch a pencil."

Very beautiful was the tribute of sorrow and affection paid the great painter by all classes when his death was announced. His body lay in state, and was viewed by long processions of students and friends and of the great outer host who knew him only by the imperishable ministry of his art. Above his bier

hung the picture upon which the deft hand, now stilled, had been so exultingly engaged; and "when those who stood around raised their eyes to 'The Transfiguration' and then bent them on the lifeless form extended beneath it, 'every heart was like to burst with grief,' as well it might."

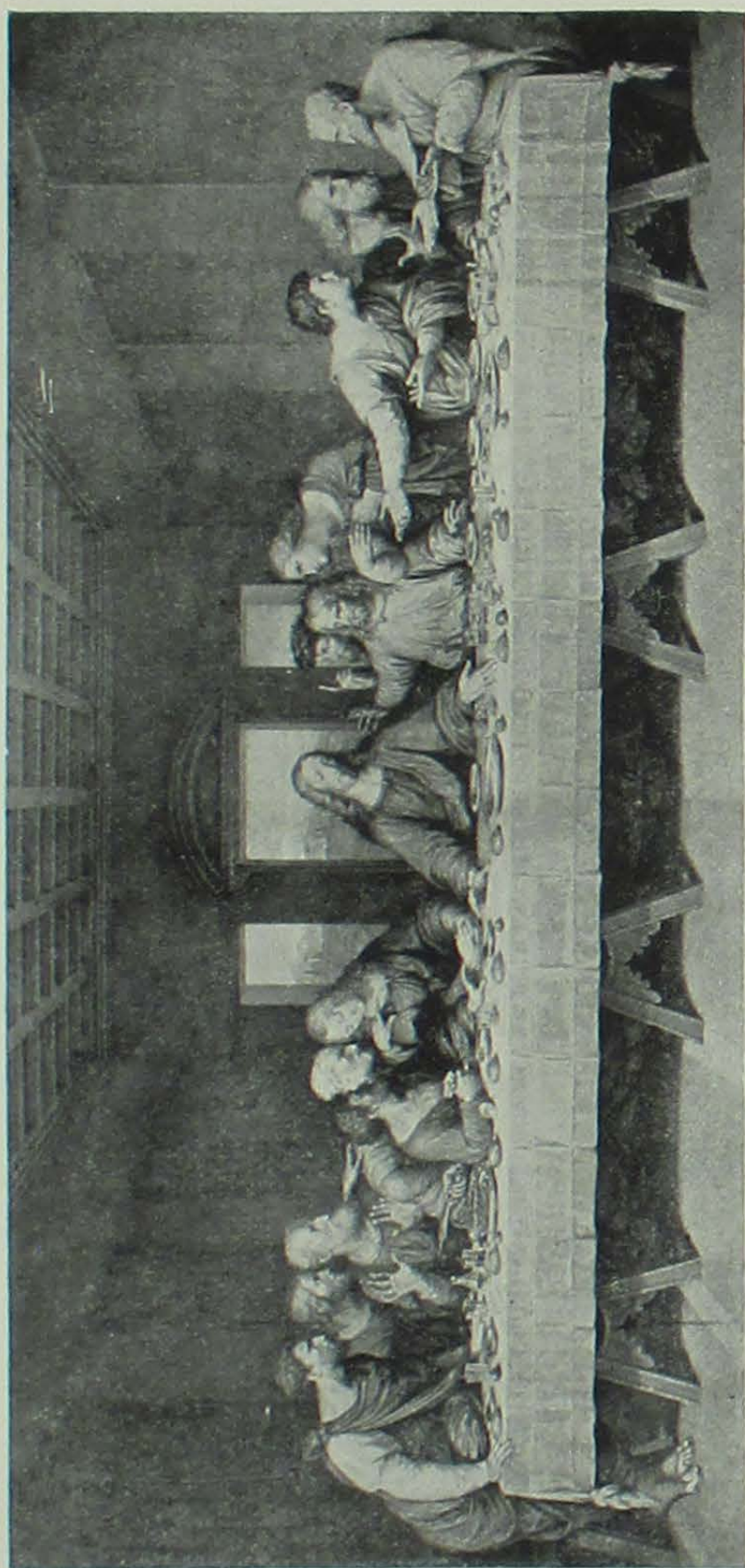
"His sun has set full orb'd, and all its splendors
Still enrich and warm us."

v.

THE LAST SUPPER.

The holy rite is o'er; the blessed sign
Is given to cheer us in this earthly strife;
The bread is broken and outpoured the wine,
Symbols of better life.

—*R. H. Baynes.*



V.

FEW men have been so nobly or so generously endowed as Leonardo da Vinci (1452-1519). To great personal beauty and an irresistible manner were added intellectual powers and activities of the most distinguished order. He is popularly known to our times as a painter; but he was even a greater thinker than painter; and so careful a critic as Hallam declares that his right to stand as the first name in the fifteenth century in respect to literary and scientific work is beyond all doubt. There was nothing too high or too deep or too trivial for the scope of his genius. He would construct curious toys for the amusement of the court, or erect fortresses for the protection of a province. He would not only play an instrument, but make it; it seemed a matter of indifference to him whether the call was to sing or play or improvise; to paint, to model, or to build a palace; to dig canals, to bridge rivers, or to tunnel mountains; to turn a rhyme or to write a scientific treatise,—his alert and searching intellect, his unbounded capacity for hard work, and a

certain facility for accomplishing things enabled him not only to do the thing desired, but to do it as no other man of his age was able to do it. Indeed, as one of his critics suggests, Leonardo's powers were too much for one man or for the ordinary length of life; they trod on each other. With fewer gifts, there would have been more results; with less ardor for science, more performance of art.

Of the outcome of all this wonderful endowment, interest centers in the painting of "The Last Supper," which adorns the wall of the refectory in the convent of Santa Maria delle Grazie, in Milan. It is almost the sole, as it certainly is the most superb, monument of his many-sided genius; and though time and unhappy fortune have ravaged it until it is but "the shadow of a shade" of its original perfection, it has been impossible wholly to extinguish the imprint of affluent genius and splendor of originality which places it among the elect creations of the art of all ages.

A fashion of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries was to decorate the walls of convent refectories with festal scenes suggested by the Scripture narrative. "The Last Supper" and the "Marriage at Cana" were favorite topics. When the former was selected, it was the wont of the monks to place their tables at right angles to the picture so that the Holy Company

was in view of all, and Christ himself seemed to preside over and sanctify the meal. The convent of Santa Maria delle Grazie was the favorite retreat of Beatrice, wife of Leonardo's patron, Ludovico Sforza. Upon the death of Beatrice, Ludovico, in one of the religious paroxysms with which he varied his general course of worldliness, had Leonardo work out his masterpiece on the refectory wall. Leonardo, at this time, was experimenting with new mediums. The ordinary process of frescoing was not to his mind. His use of oil-colors on the damp plaster was a mistake; in fifty years the picture was a ruin. One has a hint of its original glory in the remark of Louis XII of France, who, when he saw it, wanted to know "if it were not possible to hew out the wall," being minded to take it with him. To the unfortunate medium were added disasters by flood and damp, heat and cold, smoke and neglect, and, perhaps worse than all combined, "restorations" at the hands of ardent incompetents. The picture was completed in 1498. In 1652 the monks, with that indifference to genius and its work which has characterized them as a class in almost all their history, had a door cut through the lower part of the picture, destroying entirely the feet of the central figure, and displacing much of the wall besides. In 1796 the room was used as a stable and hay maga-

zine for Napoleon's cavalry. Hardly any form of ill-usage or neglect has escaped it; and yet it remains one of the most wonderful and fascinating works of art in the world.

It is said Leonardo was two years in completing the picture. The monks declared him a nuisance with his interminable delays; but he did the work in his own way, nevertheless. It must have been a sore sight to those luxurious monks to find the artist in their dining-room, solemnly, and apparently idly, regarding his handiwork, without so much as adding a single line to the picture. For, we are assured, the artist would spend hours in silent contemplation of his creation without any heed to passing time or pangs of hunger, and for days together would never lift a brush to make a change or to fulfill a dream.

On the other hand, it was not an unusual thing for even this pleasure-loving genius to leave his work at court, and hurry across the city in the blazing noon, just to incorporate a bit of new detail, or secure by a stroke or two the exact expression in posture and look which his ideal demanded.

In his treatment of "The Last Supper," Leonardo has chosen the moment when our Lord, with immeasurable pathos and sadness, announces to the disciples, "One of you shall betray me!" The words have just

been spoken, and Leonardo undertakes to exhibit the effect of the utterance upon the Twelve. One does not need to be an artist to realize the difficulties of such an undertaking; nor a connoisseur, to appreciate the marvelous insight of Leonardo's achievement. In the center is the Christ, in whose face and gesture inexpressible sadness is blended with incomparable benignity and majesty. At his right is the beloved disciple John, who, with clasped hands and disconsolate face, shows how deeply the faithlessness of his fellow-disciple has riven his heart. Peter, leaning across Judas, his attitude exhibiting excitement and impatience, is whispering to John to ask the Master "of whom he spake;" while Judas, startled by the Lord's words and the secret consciousness of his own guilt, has turned upon Peter and John as if to deny in advance the charge which he fancies is already brought home to him. In the excitement Judas has overturned the salt (thus embodying a popular superstition betokening misfortune), while his hand clutches the bag of money, which even in his disturbed mental state he will not let go. Beyond Peter is Andrew, with hands uplifted in horror; and beyond Andrew are James the Less and Bartholomew, both leaning forward as if they must verify the terrible words which they have just heard. At Jesus' left is James

the Greater, half turning upon his Lord with outstretched arms as if repelling the hideous suggestion. Behind him stands the fiery Thomas, with finger uplifted threateningly at Judas; and at his side is the lovely Philip, who, with hands on his breast, seems vehemently protesting his innocence. Matthew, young and eager, half risen from his seat and with his hand extended toward the Master, turns to Jude and Simon as if repeating the words the Lord had uttered, and exclaiming, "Did you hear what he said?" while the two older disciples, half incredulous and wholly shocked, express their concern by significant gestures. The delicate equilibrium of the whole; the completeness of each individual group and their common relation to the central figure; the distinctness of character and individuality of feature; the union of dramatic intensity with a general tranquillity of bearing; and, above all, the consummate blending of ineffable sweetness with infinite sorrow on the face of the Divine Leader,—are expressions clearly indicating the power of one who might be, not only the greatest painter, but also the greatest thinker of his age.

It will be noted that the accessories of the picture, the table, the table-cloth, the service, and even the manner of seating the guests, are all modern and Western rather than ancient and Oriental. The con-

vent in which he was working doubtless furnished the artist with the models for these, even to the tablecloth, with its sharp folds, striped pattern, and knotted corners. But, as Goethe happily suggests, it was part of Leonardo's idea to give his picture a current bearing and significance,—“the Holy party were to be drawn into the then living present; Christ was to hold his last supper among his brethren, the Dominican monks at Milan.”

To the Christian imagination the picture suggests the perpetual memorial daily re-enacted in one form or other to witness to hearts wearied, soiled, and troubled that there is rest and purity and peace in Him—

“The Love whose smile kindles the universe,
The Beauty in which all things live and move.”

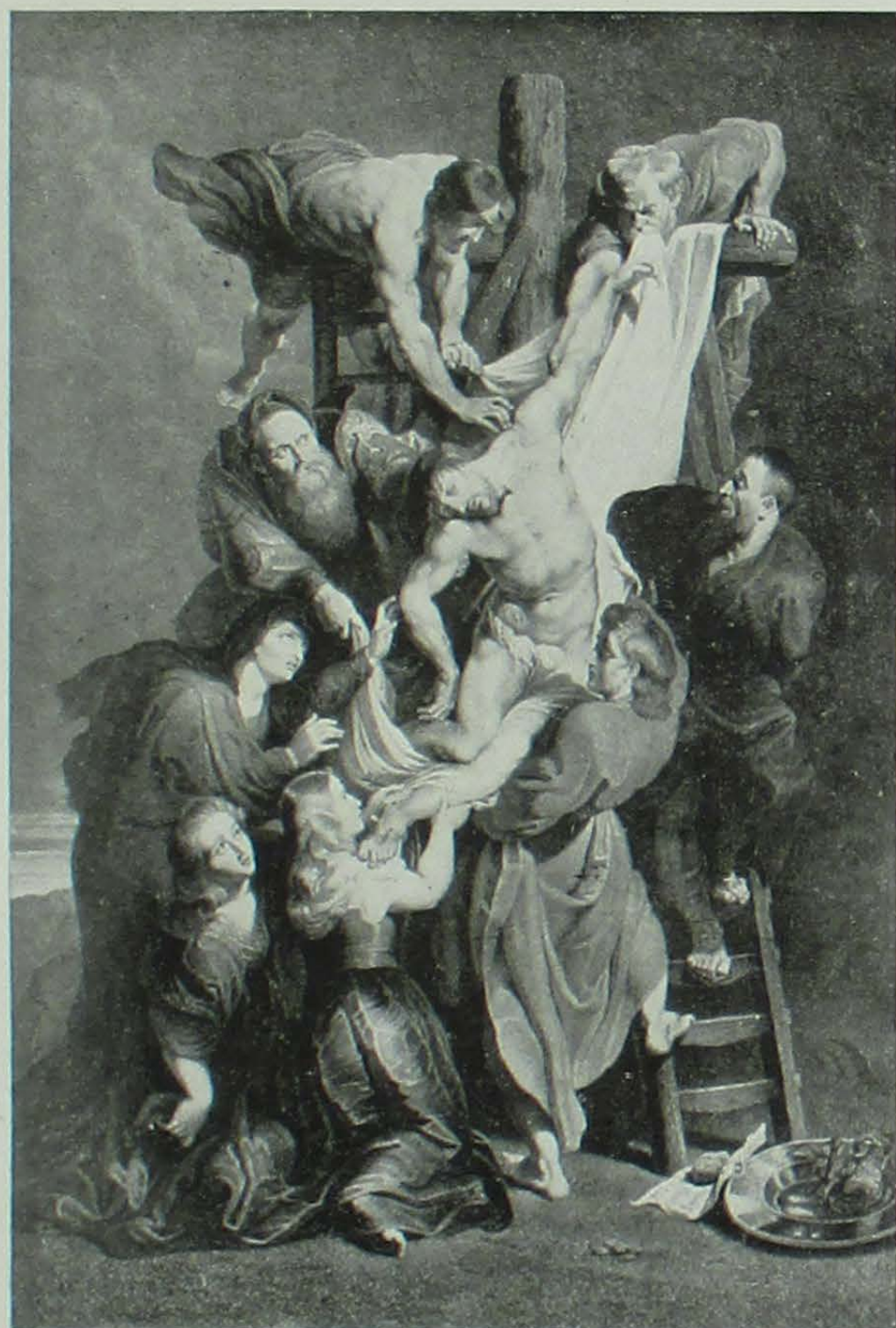
VI.

THE DESCENT FROM THE CROSS.

I not my flesh, I not my spirit spared :

Give thou me love for love.

--*Christina Rossetti.*



VI.

ROSALBA CARRIERA, the famous artist in crayon, remarked of Godfrey Kneller that he could not be religious "because he had no modesty." With less discernment many conclude that Rubens had no refinement of nature because so many of his topics are of the lusty and bacchanalian order. An artist, however, is the product of his time; and there is no doubt that what is repugnant to the sensibilities of the nineteenth was grateful and estimable to the taste of the seventeenth century. In the general judgment about Rubens, it is a question of taste, never of power. When we recall the state of society obtaining in the low countries during the Spanish ascendancy, of France under Marie de Medici, of Spain under Philip IV, and of England under Elizabeth, it is not difficult to imagine that what to us seems a blemish, was at that time altogether an excellence.

As a matter of fact, Rubens was, in his habits of life and personal intercourse, a paragon of clean and wholesome manliness. His society, no less than his

pictures, was contended for by princes and monarchs, and his circle of friends included men and women of irreproachable character and of renowned attainments. His charm of person and address, his accomplishments, his good sense and robust integrity, his industry and thrift, his sunny temper and open disposition, all contributed to a popularity which was as worthy as it was widespread. On several occasions he was employed as ambassador to mediate between disputing powers, and in every case with distinction, if not always with success. Philip IV made him a noble, and a similar honor was conferred by Charles I of England. He was the choice of Clara Eugenia, the Spanish governess of the Netherlands, for attachment to her personal court, and of Marie de Medici to paint the series of pictures celebrating her life, which are now in the Louvre. At sixty-three, in the very height of his fame and popularity, and after a career marked by such distinction and honor as come to but few in any age, he passed away amid universal mourning.

Rubens was born in Siegen, Westphalia, on the festival of Saints Peter and Paul (hence his name), June 29, 1577. The mother's choice for her son was the law; his own was art. The elements of his art were learned from Verhaecht and Van Veen, but the most potent influence upon his style was his inde-

pendent study of Titian and Paul Veronese of the Venetian school. Eight years were spent in Italy, a few months intervening for a journey to Spain. His mother's death recalled him to Antwerp, and the influence of the court kept him there. This was the principal scene of his subsequent labors. Here he married Isabella Brant, and, after her death, Helena Fourment, both of whom are celebrated in his most famous works; and here, May 30, 1640, he died and was buried, his body lying in the Church of St. Jaques, in the midst of some of his own immortal creations.

The "Descent from the Cross" is, by common consent, his masterpiece, and, by critical consent, "one of the most perfect compositions in the world." The Guild of Arquebusiers had for their patron saint St. Christopher (the Christ-bearer). In 1611 the Guild arranged with Rubens for an altar-piece to decorate their chapel in the Antwerp cathedral. The design of Rubens is an allegory of Christ-bearing. The altar-piece consists of a central compartment inclosed by two wings. In the center is the "Descent from the Cross," in which Christ is borne by his friends; on the wings are (interior) the visitation and presentation, where Christ is borne by the mother and by the aged Simeon; and (exterior) St. Christopher carrying the Christ-child according to the familiar legend, and

a hermit with owl and lamp. This last, it is said, was intended as a rebuke to the obtuseness of the Arquebusiers, who did not at first comprehend the significance of the other designs; but more likely it completes the legend of St. Christopher, with whom those symbols are frequently associated.

The modern science of biography and criticism makes sad work of the "stories" about artists and their pictures, which have hitherto made many of the old books on art so entertaining and unreliable. There is no evidence to show that Van Dyck had anything to do with the "Descent from the Cross," though the "story" is that his painting of the face and arm of Mary Magdalene drew from Rubens a glowing prediction of his pupil's future success. And the existence of a contract disposes entirely of the legend that the picture was painted in settlement of a dispute between the artist and the Guild. In dimensions the picture is thirteen by nine and a half feet; it was completed within a year, and the contract price was 2,400 florins.

The picture contains a group of nine persons effectively disposed in the shape of an irregular oval. Two men at the top are lowering the body of Christ on a white sheet; below them are Nicodemus (right) and Joseph of Arimathea (left), assisting. On the

ground St. John receives the body, and beside him are Mary Magdalene, Salome, and the mother of Christ. The sun is below the horizon, the gloom of night is gathering, and the solemn and sad ministry is conceived in a scene of appropriate silence and isolation. The inscription, weighted by a stone to keep it from blowing away, and the nails and crown of thorns placed together in a metal dish, are infinitely touching details. The skill of the picture is incomparable. Its very audacities—*e. g.*, the rich modern dresses of the women—are not noticed as incongruities; nor does one even recall as a defect the affected prettiness of John or the unchastened and almost cheerful robustness of Joseph and Nicodemus. The eye, starting from whatever point it may, is irresistibly led to the figure of Christ, the deadly pallor of whose body is shown with startling realism on the dazzling white sheet; and it is the image of that figure—

" His visage so marred more than any man,
And his form more than the sons of men "—

which the spectator carries away in his heart and imagination, never to forget.

It may fairly be doubted whether the representation of a suffering and dead Christ is a help to true religion. The art, like the preaching, of the early Church puts no emphasis upon it. The theme of

apostolic preaching was the resurrection and an ever-living Christ. "He died for our sins" is instantly followed with "and rose again for our justification." "It is Christ that died" is corrected by "yea, rather that is risen again;" the vision of John is not that of the exhausted, defeated, and blood-smeared body of Christ's humanity, but of a glorified Prince, whose eyes are as a flame of fire, whose feet glow as in a furnace, a golden girdle about his loins, and a rainbow shedding its seven-fold luster upon his star-gemmed crown. It was left for the decadent faith and low morality of the Dark Ages to make prominent the passion and crucifixion, and by a sentimental contemplation of suffering innocence excite the feelings without increasing the faith of the faithful. This impulse of art is responsible for the crucifix and cardiolatry (the "Devotion of the Sacred Heart"), and for almost every eccentricity of devotion which has paralyzed faith and dismembered love in all these centuries. Christ's suffering and death were but incidents of his life; his pains were light, matched with his victory. It is the victory which was the apostolic, and which is the Christian, concern. There is neither piety nor good sense in being so bent upon his shame that we become blind to his splendor. The heart is made strong to righteousness and helpful compassion, not

by a dead, but by a living Christ. When the poet asks,

“Is it not strange the darkest hour
That ever dawned on sinful earth
Should touch the heart with softer power
For comfort than an angel's mirth?”

it is sufficient to reply that, but for the resurrection, that darkest hour could have no power to comfort at all.

VII.


THE ASSUMPTION OF THE VIRGIN.

Blessed is she that bare Him; bless'd
The bosom where His lips were press'd;
But rather bless'd are they
Who hear His word and keep it well,
The living homes where Christ shall dwell,
And never pass away.

—*Keble.*



VII.

ENIUS does not always die young; nor does it always mature early. Raphael died at thirty-seven, and Correggio at forty; but Michael Angelo accomplished ninety years, Tintoretto eighty-two, Perugino seventy-eight, Leonardo seventy-five, and Rubens sixty-three. Every one of them worked to the last, and achieved masterpieces in old age. Titian painted his "Assumption" at forty, when a man is no longer considered "a youth;" his "Danaë," which excited the admiration of Michael Angelo, was completed at seventy, and his "The Martyrdom of St. Lawrence," one of the largest and grandest compositions, was finished when the artist was eighty-one. The passion for labor has perhaps no more striking illustration than that of Titian at ninety-nine, still virile in invention and eager in execution.

Titian had a double advantage in his birth. He was a child of the mountains and of good family—circumstances which were not without effect upon his art. If one were to select that feature which more

than any other made Titian a man apart, it would be a certain loftiness of conception by which he imparted to the meanest and most familiar things a certain dignity and grandeur of expression. The splendor and stateliness of the hills, as well as the elegance and refinement of the high-born, have passed into his work and pervade it as with a rich and luxurious atmosphere. It has been said that one could not fail utterly of being a lady or gentleman who had grown up among the silent people of Titian.

Our artist's full name was Tiziano Vecellio; the date of his birth 1477, and the place Cadore, a hill-town in the territory of Venice. The Roman school was distinguished by its superb draughtsmanship; the glory of the Venetian school was its color. The story that Titian, as a boy, did his first work with the expressed juice of flowers rather than with charcoal or slate, as other artists, embellishes this distinction. If the story is not true, it at least conveys a truth. The teachers of Titian are still in dispute, though the influence of Zuccati, the Bellinis, and Giorgione, is conceded. Venice, which early became the city of his adoption, was, to the end of a long life, the city also of his affection. As a favorite of the Emperor Charles V, he spent three years in Madrid, where some of his best work is still preserved; but his home and his

heart were in Venice, which he adorned with his genius, and which in return honored him as one of her choicest children. Here, in his beautiful home, amid the desolation of the plague, and almost in the presence of a horde of plunderers who were spoiling his treasures, he died in 1576. A colossal and somewhat overwrought monument marks the place of his burial in the Church of the Frari, for which building were painted his famous "Pesaro" Madonna and "The Assumption of the Virgin."

Among the fables constructed by devout and perhaps sincere romanticists for the consumption of the faithful in the early Church, was that of the "assumption," or "ascension" of the Virgin Mary. According to this story the Virgin died at an advanced age in Jerusalem. To her burial the apostles were miraculously conveyed from all points of the earth. The burial took place at Gethsemane. Subsequently, Thomas, who had been delayed, arrived, and at his request the body was exhumed. Immediately the body was taken up to heaven, united with the soul which had previously ascended in glory, and the Virgin received with demonstrations in which the God-head participated. It is interesting to recall that the Church authorities, when the story first gained currency, officially condemned it as a Gnostic fable. In

the Nestorian controversy, however, which resulted, as will be remembered, in a virtual elevation of the Virgin to a place in the Deity (Rénan says that to this day the Trinity of the Roman Church is the Father, Son, and Virgin Mary, with precedence given to the third person), the fable was revived, and became, in time, an accepted article in the Church East and West.

In Titian's rendering of the story the apostles are seen grouped about the open grave in attitudes expressing a variety of emotions. From the heavens God himself appears with outstretched, welcoming arms, and a smile of approval for the attendant angel who proposes the coronation of the Virgin. The Virgin, in robe of red and mantle of blue, is ascending magnificently upon a mass of cloud supported by a company of incomparable angels and *putti*, her expression of rapture being "one of the highest inspirations that art can boast." The identification of the apostles is not easy, though there is hardly any doubt as to the seated figure being Peter, and the seraphic figure at the right being John.

The picture was ordered in 1516 as an altar-piece for the Church of the Frari, the guardian of which provided it with a magnificent marble frame. Its dimensions are about twenty-three feet by twelve, and

the composition was designed for exhibition in the semi-darkness of a church interior. In its present place, in the Academy of Venice, the exaggerations of form and color, which were virtues in the gloom, show as blemishes in the light; though even the severest critics of detail admit the ravishing impression of the whole. It is with pictures as with people. In their proper place harmony is assured; out of it the maladjustment emphasizes defects. An artist has to consider the point of view. Donatello's St. John is a grotesque creation on the level, but a perfect model in its exalted niche. The monks of the Frari Convent disapproved the picture. Titian responded by declaring that he would keep the picture. The head of the monastery interfered, and healed the breach with a profuse apology. The quarrel excited public expectation, and when the picture was first displayed on a festival Sunday in March, 1518, the great church was crowded with eager and enthusiastic spectators. The fame of the painter was at once established, and his rank among the greatest artists of the world assured.

It is not often that slovenliness secures the prize of virtue. But in the case of the "Assumption" it seems to have succeeded. By the flame and smoke of altar candles the picture was so scorched and black-

ened that, upon the invasion of Italy by the French, the commissioners, who were detailed to spoil the country of its art treasures, decided that it was not worth transporting to Paris. When the danger of French spoliation was over, a connoisseur and patriot secured the cleaning and restoration of the picture, and its removal from monkish insensibility and indifference.

One can understand, in the presence of this splendid creation, what is meant by a "colorist"—not a wild trafficker in pigment, but a quick, clear-eyed discerner of color-harmony, and one keenly sensitive to the relationship, the qualities, and the suitableness of his colors one to another in whatever light they may be distributed. Artists are many, but colorists are few. When one has named the great masters of the Venetian school—Titian, Giorgione, Tintoretto, and Paul Veronese, with Rubens and Velasquez—he has almost exhausted the list. The colorist supremacy of the Venetians is proverbial. Poussin, the French artist, being asked why he would not remain in Venice, replied, "If I stay here I shall become a colorist;" and an English decorator, during a visit to Venice, carefully avoided every building containing a Tintoretto, lest he should injure his carefully-trained taste. A less affected and higher taste now esteems color the

highest quality a painting may possess. And Titian is the high priest of color. Tintoretto, while a student, had upon his wall, for a constant reminder of the highest ideal, "the drawing of Michael Angelo and the coloring of Titian." The incident is suggestive. Men are fashioned by and to their ideals; and Tintoretto, if he was neither a Michael Angelo nor a Titian, was brought to his own eminence by striving toward the highest.

Titian had a rare charm in personal intercourse. He was loved by all classes. He was an especial favorite with the Emperor Charles V, who on one occasion picked up a pencil which the artist had dropped, and, handing it to him, remarked that "Titian was worthy of being served by Cæsar." So great was the affection of the people for him that, though persons dying of the plague were buried without the city, Titian was sepulchered in the Church of the Frari.

VIII.

THE LAST JUDGMENT.

When the Son of man shall come in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then shall He sit upon the throne of His glory. And before Him shall be gathered all nations; and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats.


—*The Gospel of Matthew.*

O! on that day, that wrathful day,
When man to judgment wakes from clay,
Be Thou, O Christ, the sinner's stay,
Though heaven and earth shall pass away!

—*Sir Walter Scott.*



VIII.

 HERE is a story told of Michael Angelo to the effect that one day he called upon Raphael when the latter was at work in the Farnesina palace in Rome. Raphael was out, and Michael Angelo, after waiting some time, departed without leaving his name. Calling the servant's attention to a head which he had just sketched upon the wall, he said, "Show this to your master, and he will know who I am." When Raphael returned, the servant delivered the message, and the artist, looking at the head, exclaimed, "Michael Angelo!" Similarly, the visitor to the Sistine Chapel, confronting the fresco of the "Last Judgment," instinctively feels that but one mind was capable of such a creation—Michael Angelo's.

This picture is, by common consent, regarded as the most famous single picture in the world. It is not a beautiful picture, though there are forms and faces of extraordinary loveliness among its over two hundred separate creations. It is not a pleasing picture even to the skilled amateur; but as a study of the human form in all conceivable postures of rest and

action, of foreshortening and of suggested movement, it is the stupendous miracle of art. The centuries have dealt hardly with the picture. Dirt and neglect have made their inroads, re-enforced by the smoke of incense and altar candle, and by the aimless and affected retouching of ambitious incompetents. The visitor finds himself at first repelled by its manifest want of grace and attractive coloring; but upon repeated inspection he bears away a sense of power which is beyond grace, and of august majesty which is beyond charm of color. It is emphatically the picture which should be judged, not by the first, but by the last impression.

Few buildings in the world outrank the Sistine Chapel in historic or artistic interest. For over four centuries it has been the oratory of the Popes, and the scene of important and imposing religious ceremonies. It is a simple barn-like chamber, one hundred and thirty-two feet long, forty-four feet broad, and sixty-eight feet high. It is lighted from two sides by twelve windows of plain glass, set high in the walls; and while the mural decorations are among the richest in the world, there is an utter absence of that luxuriousness of appointment which is usually associated with ritualistic worship. It was for this room that Raphael designed his famous tapestries which, on

festival occasions, were hung along the lower stretches of the side walls. The upper spaces bore frescoes designed and executed by the most celebrated masters of the fifteenth century. In 1508 the ceiling was committed to Michael Angelo, who, though he claimed to be no painter, adorned it with his most perfect work. In 1534 he was also commissioned to decorate the north end wall, above the altar, with a scene of the "Last Judgment." To do this, three frescoes by Perugino, which had constituted the original decoration, were obliterated. The work occupied Michael Angelo over seven years, the completed picture being disclosed on Christmas-day, 1541. It was done by the artist, as in the case of the ceiling, without any assistance from others.

Though the composition, at first sight, seems intricate and confused, a little study discloses a design of perfect order and symmetry, the theme being distributed in four planes of skillful grouping. A ceiling pendentive breaks the surface at the top, leaving semicircular compartments in which are grouped two bands of tumultuous angels bearing the cross, the column (whipping-post), and other symbols of our Lord's passion. Below and in the center is Christ, as Judge, rising from his throne in threatening wrath, and forming his lips for the awful doom of the wicked,

"Depart from me, ye cursed!" At his right is the Virgin, shrinking in terror from the dread scene which confronts her; around are apostles, saints, and martyrs in a perfect frenzy of entreaty. On the third plane, in the center, is a group of Titanic cherubs sounding the trumpets, at whose note the earth and the sea give up their dead. At their right souls are seen ascending to judgment; on their left the condemned are sinking to doom. In the lowest plane of all, on the left of the spectator, are earth and the grave, with the dead struggling for release; on the right is hell, where Charon, with uplifted oar, is driving the condemned from his boat into the hands of demons who drag them for further sentence to Minos, the judge of the infernal world.

To the thoughtful Christian of the present day the picture stands as a terrible representation of a terrible thought terribly misconceived. No doubt it represents the theology of the times; heaven and hell were tremendous facts in the creed and imagination of the sixteenth century. Michael Angelo was a close student of the Bible as interpreted for him by his favorite teachers, Dante and Savonarola. It is even said that, while engaged in this work, the artist read and re-read the sermons of the great Florentine preacher. But is it the spirit of the New Testament teaching

that angels will run with tempestuous eagerness to confront sinners with the cross and crown of thorns, the sponge and cruel nails, as irrefutable testimony to their sinfulness? Is it the Christ of the Gospels who stands to judge the world without a ray of sympathy or tenderness or sorrow in attitude or expression? Is it the grace of holiness which brings St. Lawrence and his gridiron, and Bartholomew with his flaying knife and empty skin, substantially to remind their Lord that, unless he makes the doom of the sinner as terrible as imagination can conceive it, both he and they have suffered in vain? Where are the symbols of the blessed? It is just at this point the picture fails of effective teaching and moral eloquence. For, as a discerning critic has remarked: "We look in vain for the glory of heaven among the groups of the pardoned, or for beings bearing the stamp of divine holiness and the renunciation of human weakness. Everywhere we meet with the expression of human passion and human effort. We see no choir of solemn, tranquil forms; no harmonious unity of clear, grand lines produced by ideal draperies. But in their stead we have a confused crowd of naked bodies in violent attitudes, unaccompanied by any of the characteristics made sacred by holy tradition." Truer, far, is the conception of Thomas of Celano, who, in

his lyric vision of the "Day of Wrath," finds a place for the gentle heart of the Son of God:

"Holy Jesus, meek, forbearing,
For my sins the death-crown wearing,
Save me, in that day, despairing.

Worn and weary, thou hast sought me;
By thy cross and passion bought me—
Spare the hope thy labors brought me."

The Christ of Michael Angelo's "Judgment Day" is no Son of God at all, but a wrathful Jupiter with thunderbolts; his saints and martyrs are merest pagans in their manifest eagerness for wrath and revenge; and even his apostles are not messengers of any gospel of peace and gladness, but a band of Titans counseling war.

It was to be expected that the picture would be criticised. The chamberlain of Pope Julius III, from the prominence given to the nude, thought it better suited to a pot-house than to the Pope's prayer-room. For which remark Michael Angelo painted the chamberlain to the life, and placed him in hell, with horns on his head and a serpent about his loins. Finding himself thus a subject for court mirth, the chamberlain appealed to the Pope for redress, whereupon His Holiness remarked: "Had he placed you in purgatory, I should have used my best efforts to release

you; but I have no influence in hell, where there is no redemption." Another Pope, however, secured drapery for some of the figures from Daniele da Volterra, who was thereupon dubbed by his witty countrymen, "The Breeches Maker."

It is a conceit of the late Lord Beaconsfield's that almost everything great has been done by youth. The exceptions to this make a long and notable list. Witness this "Last Judgment" of Michael Angelo's, executed when the artist was over sixty. Titian painted his "Martyrdom of St. Lawrence" at eighty-one; Tintoret, his "Paradise" at seventy; Perugino, his Certosa "Madonna" at sixty; Leonardo, his "Mona Lisa," and Rubens, his "Feast of Venus," at fifty-three. It would be easy to produce lists of equal note from the annals of literature and the records of science. What a suggestion for our day, when so many seem to regard old age as a period of weary waiting for death rather than an opportunity for ripe production of tried thought and treasured experience! "I have no charge to bring against old age," said the pagan Gorgias, who had entered well upon his second century. Nor will any one who, like Gorgias and Michael Angelo, keeps his mind quickened and his sympathies fresh by constant commerce with great themes.

IX.

LOVE AND DEATH.

"This is the house of life, and at its door
Young Love keeps anxious watch, while outside stands
One with firm importuning demands
An entrance. Strange is he, but Love with lore
Taught by quick terror names him Death; and o'er
Love's face there comes a cloud and the small hands
Would shut the door; for he from loveless lands
Is foe to Love, now and for evermore.

Nay, not for evermore! Love is but young,
And young Love sees alone what youth can see;
With age Love's vision grows more clear and strong,
And he discerns that this same Death, whom he
Had thought his foe, striving to do him wrong,
Comes with the gift of immortality."



IX.



HOW does he read life? This is, after all, in painting as in literature, the first and fundamental question. It is all very well to talk of the artist's draughtsmanship, and sense of color, and cleverness of technique; but not in any one of these, or in all of these together shall he make himself immortal. He is worth to mankind just what his ideas are worth, and no more. Mere masterfulness with brush and pencil may give a picture widespread popularity, but it never confers upon the artist the sure hope of immortality. Ruskin has a wise and enduring word on the exceeding cleverness of the Dutch *genre* school. "Most pictures of the Dutch school," he says, "excepting always those of Rubens, Van Dyke, and Rembrandt, are ostentatious exhibitions of the artist's power of speech, the clear and vigorous elocution of useless and senseless words; while the early efforts of Cimabue and Giotto are the burning messages of prophecy delivered by the stammering lips of infants." One

may dissent from this particular judgment; but the distinction hinted at is one which the human mind will forever make. There are paintings widely heralded, and schools of painting loudly self-assertive, with nothing to claim for themselves but the apotheosis of beauty in line or color, and the prophecy of the commonplace that "beauty is beauty." This is not great art. To quote Mr. Ruskin again, "The picture which has the nobler and more numerous ideas, however awkwardly expressed, is a greater and better picture than that which has less noble and less numerous ideas, however beautifully expressed." In other words, the true measure of the artist is the quality of his message rather than the merit of his manner.

The late Mr. George Frederick Watts had the twofold gift of genius—something really vital and noble to say and a distinguished way of saying it. It could hardly be otherwise with a man who had adopted as his life motto, "The Utmost for the Highest," and who, in beautiful self-detachment, could say of himself in the ripeness of his powers: "I am nothing. I have no genius, no facility; any one could do better work if he sacrificed everything to it as I do. One thing alone I possess, and I do not re-

member the time I was ever without it—an aim towards the highest, the best, and a burning desire to reach it.” One has but to recall the singularly pure, unselfish, and devoted life of this high-minded and richly-dowered nature to realize how far his art must be removed from the trivial or the base. He felt, as every really great artist has felt, that his gifts were a trust from God to be used for the furtherance of the common weal and happiness. He accepted in the noblest spirit the responsibility of being the teacher of his age, and he exercised himself laboriously and unstintedly, through a long artistic career and in the face of precarious health, to discharge to the utmost what he felt to be a divine commission. With his opulent genius and his capacity for work, he could easily have amassed great wealth; but to him “the first duty of life was to give to the world the best that was in him, and to present to the public the fruits of his gifts and of his labor.” More than once he offered to decorate great public buildings for the bare cost of materials, that he might in this way educate the public taste and furnish a daily and accessible splendor for eyes all too unused to the ravishments of art. He had, a friend says, very decided ideas and feel-

ings as to the duty of every man of every class effecting something for the good of his country; for himself he asked only to be allowed to work and to make his art a factor in ennobling the thought and feeling of his generation. Except the work done under commission for individuals and that which was sold to meet the necessities of a retired and very simple life, all his most famous and characteristic work was given outright to the public. In return it has been given to him in larger measure than to any other artist of his time, not only to delight and, through delight, make hard conditions lighter for the poor, but to promote among all classes companionship with the noblest ideas in a noble expression.

Mr. Watts read life religiously. He himself says that it was his wish in all he painted for the public "to raise in the mind of the spectator thoughts religious in the widest sense." In the same deliverance he deplores "that the importance of art as a servant of religion and of the State has been lost sight of, and that it has become not much more than an article of luxury." His themes cover a wide range; but in every one of them he is the seer, the prophet, the preacher of righteousness, the apostle of Love.

The measure of his Faith and quality of his message are seen to good advantage in what many regard as his masterpiece, the painting called "Love and Death." The theme was suggested by the illness and death of a young man of great promise whose portrait Watts painted when the signs of Death's inevitable approach were too clear to be mistaken. The artist was an involuntary but sympathetic witness of the struggle between Love and Death, carried on through many weeks. Death is represented by a draped figure, whose back alone we see and whose way into the home where Love has reigned is blocked by Love himself in the form of a winged youth. Poor Love fares hardly. With wings crushed, he is thrust aside and thrown back on the garlands of roses which grow round the entrance of his dwelling. The interest of the picture centers in the artist's interpretation of Death. So far from the familiar horror of the grinning skeleton bequeathed to art by the theology of the ages of unfaith, Watts returns to the nobler conception of the ancient Greeks and early Christians, and represents Death as a noble and beautiful figure upon whom rests a light supernal, and from whom light is diffused to glorify both Love himself and the home he so jealously and impotently

guards. If Love could but see Death's face he would know Death instantly, not as the foe but as the obverse of great life, not as its extinguisher but as its expander and interpreter, not as the warder of the charnel house but as the guide from light to light through a brief darkness. In the beauty and majesty of the figure the artist emphasizes the divine commission of Death, who is sent of God, not as the enemy of man and avenger of sin, but as "the gentle nurse who puts us all, as her children, to bed;" in the light which makes glorious her approach he reminds us of the unending day in that land from which Death comes, where "our sun shall no more go down, neither for brightness shall our moon withdraw itself, but the Lord shall be our everlasting light and our God our glory." This attitude of the artist's faith in recognizing the benignity rather than the blight of Death's presence, is admirably set forth in the "Morning Thought" of the late Edward Rowland Sill:

"What if some morning, when the stars were paling,
And the dawn whitened, and the East was clear,
Strange peace and rest fell on me from the presence
Of a benignant Spirit standing near;

And I should tell him, as he stood beside me,
"This is our Earth—most friendly Earth and fair;
Daily its sea and shore through sun and shadow
Faithful it turns, robed in its azure air:

'There is blest living here, loving and serving,
And quest of truth, and serene friendships dear;
But stay not, Spirit! Earth has one destroyer—
His name is Death; flee, lest he find thee here!'

And what if then, while the still morning brightened,
And freshened in the elm the Summer's breath,
Should gravely smile on me the gentle angel,
And take my hand and say, 'My name is Death?'

It is surely a matter of some moment that art should take so noble and so Christian a view of the "tremendous necessity" we call death. Conviction of a future life is writ large on all great literature. It is the only adequate explanation of noble life; it is the triumphant message of assurance from the risen Christ. And yet is not Christendom still so much under the dominion of sense that, in the presence of Death, faith in the life to come becomes the most terrible of uncertainties? Do not grief-smitten men and women incontinently forget the testimony of the great-hearted in all ages, the testimony of their own reason, the testimony of Him who brought life and immortality to light and who tenderly insisted that had there not been provision

for man in the Father's mansion beyond, he would have told us? We see in a mirror dimly, as perhaps is inevitable when we look through eyes dimmed with tears. We see Love with his roses scattered, his wings bruised, his sweet protesting body brushed aside; but we see not the benignity of the Messenger's face, nor feel the warm vitality of his hand, nor hear the gracious cadences of his call. To a world sitting more than is necessary or wholesome in the gloom of "the shadow feared of man," such a view of Death as Watts presents is a clear and persuasive summons to the nobler and more joyous gospel of life everlasting in Him who triumphed over death and led captivity captive.

"Exult, my soul! Cast off thy gloom!
The balm and bloom of Easter saith
That Christ is victor o'er the tomb
And Love is mightier far than Death."

X.

THE WHEEL OF FORTUNE

One equal temper of heroic hearts,
Made weak by time and fate, but
Strong in will; to strive, to seek, to find,
And not to yield.

—*Alfred Tennyson.*



X.

THE WHEEL OF FORTUNE.



THE late Sir Edward Burne-Jones was popularly identified with a form of art so strange as to be thought "uncanny." The sentiment with regard to his work was well summed up in the remark of a French critic who, commenting upon the artist's "The Beguiling of Merlin," which was on exhibition at the Exposition Universelle in Paris in 1878, declared it an attraction to the critic, but not to the public: "The painter seems to dwell so far from our art and our life." "The Wheel of Fortune" shows almost none of the Pre-Raphaelite peculiarities of which Mr. Burne-Jones was the most consistent, as he certainly was the most illustrious, exponent. It might have been the work of Lord Leighton or of Mr. Watts: it is peculiar only in the rare grandeur of the figure of Fortune and the delicate beauty of the victims of her wheel. The picture suggests a new and truer view of the man and his work than is furnished by

the more "remote" essays in composition and color which provoked the witticism of *Punch*, "O! Burn Jones!" and "the greenery-yallery, Grosvenor-gallery young man" of the comic opera. For it shows that, by the traditions with which, in art, we are most familiar, he is the peer of the best and that whatever his eccentricities they are not the eccentricities of inadequate powers of conception or of incompetent dealing with the technique of his art. Moreover, it shows also, that though socially somewhat of a recluse and artistically a devotee of the beautiful and the apostle of "other worldism," he was not insensible to the problems of life or of the service of art in ministering to the world's woe.

Mr. Burne-Jones's artistic creed as given to a friend is this: "I love the immaterial; you see it is the things of the soul that are real, the only real things in the universe." To another friend he said in substance: "To be a great painter a man must also have a great spirit; he must be a dreamer and not be ashamed of his dreams, must indeed account them of paramount worth; he must be so continent of his faith that he will not barter the least portion of it in order to win a worthless approval; he must be so proud that he will disdain to prostitute his

genius to a public use; he must be so single-hearted that, like Sir Galahad, there can be for him only one Sanc Grael, beauty, and only one quest, the life-long, insistent effort to discern and to interpret in beauty that Loveliness, that Beauty which is at once his inspiration, his dream, his despair, and his eternal hope." Once more, it was this artist's conviction, formulated when a young man, that "One's work whatsoever it be, must be the best of its kind, the noblest we can offer." When, to such convictions and such ideals is added the enriching and ennobling discipline of a generous culture, it is safe to assume that Mr. Burne-Jones, whether his work be canonic or eccentric, will never be commonplace.

Two features of his early career are of more than ordinary interest. By his parents Edward was intended for the Church. Like Renan, the lad was greatly impressed by the atmosphere of a noble service nobly rendered in a noble edifice. But, when about twenty, the sight of a picture by Rossetti settled the matter of his calling and, with young William Morris, also intended for the ministry, he declared instantly and irrevocably for art. The other feature of interest is that until he saw Rossetti's picture he never dreamed of having any liking

for paintings to say nothing of the painter's career. "I quite hated painting when I was little," he says; "until I saw Rossetti's work and Fra Angelico's, I never supposed that I liked painting." Naturally, this sudden determination to another career found the young man utterly without the elements of his craft. A course at the schools was opposed by Rossetti who, from this time, became Burne-Jones's mentor and inspiration. Until Rossetti's death, the pupil never did anything without wondering what Rossetti would think of it. By years of patient continuance in well doing Burne-Jones quite made good the lack of early training and became a subtle and sensitive draughtsman.

A word ought to be said about Burne-Jones's alleged worship of beauty. In general there exists a feeling that beauty is to be regarded as a snare of the devil. The pulpit is not slow to enforce the coincidence between the high art and low morals of Greece in the acme of her artistic development, and of Europe in the glory of her Renaissance perfection. But is not modern London with her artistic commonplaces just about as abominable as ever Athens was? And is not modern Rome with no art at all just about as corrupt as the Rome of Raphael and Leo the

Tenth? The bane of morality is not art but luxury among the rich and a want of moral fiber in all classes. Certainly no charge of immorality lies against the greatest artists themselves. Raphael, Michael Angelo, Titian, Rubens, Leonardo, Watts, and Burne-Jones preached a gospel of Beauty just as Mr. Barnardo and General Booth preach a gospel of cleanliness; not because there is salvation in either beauty or cleanliness, but because both re-enforce the gospel of God's love by access of self-respect and an enriched emotional nature. The sense of beauty is universal; it is not the religious sense, any more than Beauty is Religion; but in beauty the revelation which God has made of himself in Nature and the Bible re-enforces his appeal to the universal sense. Were the world less beautiful it might still be habitable and sufficient for the getting and spending on which so many lay waste their powers; had the Bible no Book of Psalms, no story of Ruth, no oracle of Isaiah, no parable of the Prodigal Son, no eulogy of Love, it might still have been sufficient for doctrine, reproof, correction, and instruction in righteousness. But how abridged its human interest would have been! This is the great apology for beauty; it is not faith nor an ob-

ject of faith; but it is one of the mouths through which a hungering faith is fed, an avenue along which God may travel to reveal himself to the inquiring soul.

Mr. Burne-Jones's "The Wheel of Fortune" is a case in point. The extraordinary beauty of the picture, quite apart from any message, would compel attention. It is the arrested attention which gives the message its opportunity. And what is that message? "The Wheel of Fortune" stands for the pessimist's view of life. Fortune, herself, calm, majestic, unheeding, turns her wheel and grinds to nothingness her incomparable roll of victims—the poet with his crown of laurel, the prince with his scepter of royalty, the slave with his chains. There is no difference; dust and nothingness are the common end of all. "Look at this," says the artist in effect, "look at this and let your own heart answer the gospel of Pessimism and of a bald materialism. Can the universe as you know it, even at its worst, be explained on any such theory as this? Are the inspirations of genius, the achievements of statesmanship, the labor and inspiration, the love and loyalty even of the slave to come to naught and to count for naught?" The answer of the heart is instant

and final. It may have no reasoned answer to give; but it has confident and final assurance that whatever may or may not be true *this* can not be true. Such a view of the universe would paralyze all labor, all virtue, all aspiration; it would make man the victim of creation and not its crown, it would make life his bitterest woe and not his most blessed opportunity for manhood. One could never look at such a picture as this and forget its rebuke to the godless view of the world. The solemn unheeding of Fortune, and the remorseless turn of the wheel, are alike robbed of their horror by the inalienable conviction that such a view of the universe can not be true. It may not be easy to formulate, but there is that in the picture which sends one away, not with a sigh but with a song in heart, and the words of the Laureate, which were the faith of the artist himself, might well voice the burden of the song:

Turn, Fortune, turn thy wheel with smile or frown;
With that wild wheel we go not up or down,
Our hoard is little, but our hearts are great.

Smile and we smile, the lords of many lands;
Frown and we smile, the lords of our own hands;
For man is man and master of his fate.

XI.

THE PROPHETS.

He left his city and went forth to teach
Mankind, his peers, the hidden harmony
That underlies God's discords, and to reach
And touch the master-string that, like a sigh,
Thrills in their souls, as if it would beseech
Some hand to sound it, and to satisfy
Its yearning for expression.

—*Jean Ingelow.*



ELIJAH.

MOSES.

JOSHUA.

XI.

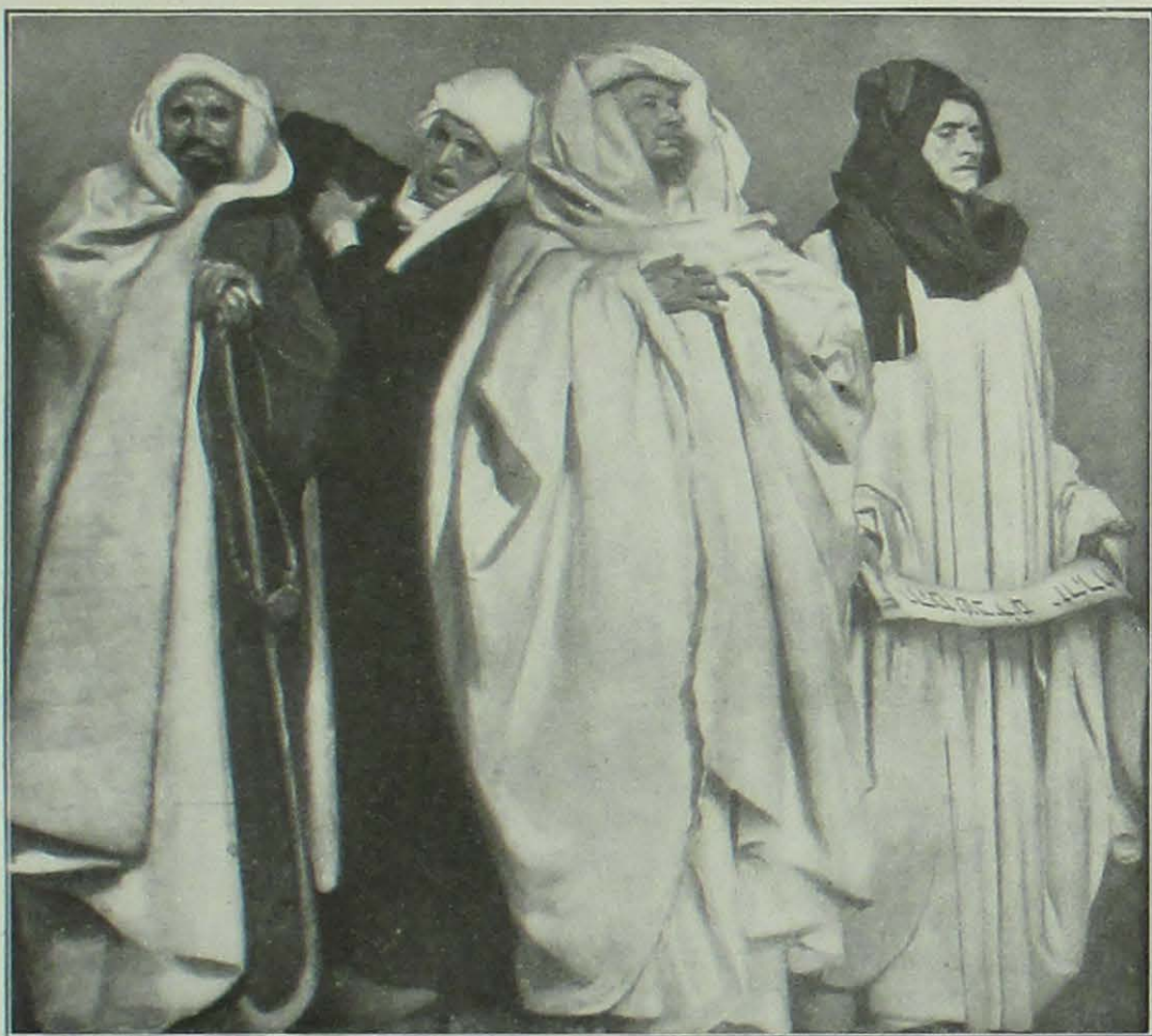
THE GOODLY FELLOWSHIP OF THE PROPHETS.



MR. SARGENT'S well-known decoration in the Boston Public Library is a striking and suggestive comment on the role of the prophet in the evolution of religion. It will be remembered that the decoration as a whole is designed to illustrate "certain stages of Jewish and Christian history;" and that the first section, dealing with the struggle of monotheism with polytheism, is that to which the frieze of the Hebrew prophets is appended. In that struggle the prophets were prime and determining factors. Their work contributed one of the greatest spiritual forces in the history of mankind, and enabled Israel to realize as a nation the promise made by God to it in Abraham, that through his seed all the nations of the earth should be blest.

The figures in Mr. Sargent's frieze are arranged in four groups of fours and a central group of three.

The central group consists of Moses, flanked by Joshua (drawing the sword) on his left and Elijah (praying) on his right. On Elijah's right are arranged Daniel, Ezekiel, Nahum, Amos (with his herdsman's staff), Hosea, Obadiah (on his knees), Joel, and Zephaniah. On Joshua's left are Jeremiah, Jonah, Isaiah (with upraised hands and ecstatic gaze), Habakkuk, Micah, Haggai, Malachi, and Zechariah. The last three, by look and gesture, symbolize the hope of Israel in the coming Messiah; and connect the decoration of which the frieze is a part with the decorations on the connecting and opposite walls, which show Christ preaching to the nations of the world, and his Church subduing all men unto itself. The grouping of the prophets is, of course, with the exception of the Moses group, purely arbitrary. No regard has been paid either to chronology or to association of temperamental characteristics. One might, of course, find a balance in having two of the so-called "greater" prophets, Isaiah and Jeremiah, on one side, offset by the other two, Ezekiel and Daniel, on the other side; or in placing Micah and Amos (both ardent political reformers) over against each other; or, in putting Hosea, the prophet of love, on one side, to



AMOS.

NAHUM.

EZEKIEL.

DANIEL.

mate with Jonah, the prophet of tolerance, on the other. But points of contact in time or temperament were of no immediate concern to the artist; he deals with Hebrew prophecy as an institution, and the message of his composition is not affected by his distribution of the individuals. Indeed, the date of some of the prophets is anything but certain as yet; and, in some cases, notably that of Malachi, the trace of personality is of the slightest. These things, however, do not in any way invalidate Mr. Sargent's idea, which is to show that Hebrew prophecy—an institution which stands by itself in the history or religion—was God's chief instrument for maintaining and promoting right and worthy conceptions of God during the ages of darkness and confusion which obtained in the world until the coming of Christ.

Moses is rightly the central figure in prophecy. If he is more familiar to us as the law-giver, yet the writer of Deuteronomy records the common judgment of his nation that never before or after was there a "prophet" like unto Moses whom the Lord knew face to face (Deut. xxxiv, 10). In Moses we have the perfect type of the prophet, the man who

speaks for God, to the people whom God would instruct. Moreover, in Israel, everything dates from Moses. With him begins the national history. The ideas for which he stood, and for the preservation and spread of which he legislated, were the ideas which made Israel unique among the nations. They became the basis and constitute the very heart of all the prophetic teaching. Jehovah, supreme God of Israel, sharing with none his right of rule over the people; exacting, under awful penalty, implicit obedience and exclusive worship; Jehovah, exalted in righteousness, who demands as the condition of acceptable worship the clean hand and the pure heart, the just balance and unfailing love of the brethren; Jehovah, who sets obedience above sacrifice, and mercy above the burnt offering; who insists that all life shall have reference to his will and all work be done as in his sight—this is the God of Moses, this is the God of the prophets. The prophets virtually originate nothing; they but recall the people to the standards of Moses. One scholar goes so far as to say that without Moses the prophets could not have existed; that, as faithful and just stewards, they only put to interest the pound they inherited from him.



ZEPHANIAH.

JOEL.

OBADIAH.

HOSEA.

The association of Elijah with Moses is appropriate. Next to Moses Elijah is the outstanding figure in Jewish history. Of his speech but a few fragments have been preserved; of his writings none. Yet from the spaces of Old and New Testament history the sense of his presence is never absent. The pose as in the case of Moses is characteristic. Moses grasps with both hands the tables of the law; Elijah stands wrapped in prayer. It is by prayer that Elijah realizes his intense belief in Jehovah. It is the conscious presence of Jehovah "before whom I stand," that enables him fearlessly to rebuke kings and, unterrified, confront the priests of Baal. Like that of Moses, his word was fundamental and far-reaching. From Elijah's time, according to one of the most eminent of Old Testament scholars, the belief in "Jehovah the God of Israel" was never again assailed; the prophets of the eighth century were able to start from it as a universal conviction; and for this foundation for their preaching they had Elijah and his school to thank.

The introduction of Joshua at the left hand of Moses is not so easy to understand. Joshua is not usually reckoned among the "prophets," though, it is true, the Eastern Church thus designates and

celebrates him. But his work for Israel was of moment. It was under Joshua that the new and rather raw nation made the peerless campaign against Canaan and settled itself in the home thus conquered. It was Joshua who allotted the land to the tribes and started them fairly on their separate and distinct national career. Moreover, it was Joshua who taught them to look to Jehovah as the source of strength and assurance of victory in battle and to regard him as their sole resort when the enemy was in force against them. A helpful influence was this high-spirited, clean-souled, devout warrior, who in war and peace, in camp and court, knew no higher donor than to be a soldier of Jehovah, and a helper of his people.

Of the other figures in the frieze those most familiar through individual reproductions are Hosea's and Isaiah's. Hosea is said to be a favorite with Mr. Sargent. Though ranked as one of the "minor" prophets, Hosea is rightly placed as one of the greatest religious geniuses which the world has ever produced. His book is to the other books of the Old Testament what the Gospel of John is to the other books of the New Testament—the vision of the heart of God. The figure struck



JEREMIAH.

JONAH.

ISAIAH.

HABAKKUK.

out by him from the sorest of domestic experiences to represent the love of God is among the most audacious things in literature. Only our Lord himself was equal to it. How any human being could have thought of it, or, having thought of it, could have written it, is beyond saying, unless he was inspired. It is just the thought of God which God himself must have taught the prophet. Certainly no eye had seen, nor ear heard, nor had entered the heart of man in Hosea's time such a thought of God as the prophet's parable sets forth. For this is Hosea's message: God is love, clear eyed, discerning, but patient, unwearying, unfailing, hopeful, and helpful for the best in the worst, pitying and resourceful for the worst in the best.

Isaiah is the most widely read of the prophets. The splendor of his speech has much to do with this popularity. He was Israel's consummate orator. "Never," says one reviewer of Isaiah's work, "never did the speech of Canaan pour forth with more brilliant and triumphant beauty than from his lips. He has a strength and power of language, a majesty and sublimity of expression, an inexhaustible richness of fitting and stirring energy that overwhelms the reader, nay fairly bewilders him."

Isaiah, too, had the statesman's grasp and penetration in an unusual degree; in him more than in any other of the prophets we find the larger outlook and the well defined conception of universal history. It was his task during the trying period of national storm and stress under the policy of Ahaz to keep "the little ship of his fatherland" from being driven on the rocks and from being abandoned to the elements.

Among the distinguishing features of Hebrew prophecy in general, Mr. Sargent has succeeded in suggesting the following: First, the divine urgency which is indicated by the faces uplifted to God; the prophet knows that the simple duty is laid upon him of bringing a message directly from God to God's people. Secondly, the unwelcome character of the work. Joel hides his face as from a horror; Obadiah casts himself upon the ground in despair; Micah leans his head upon his hand as if with a sense of the utter hopelessness of his task. The prophet was "full of power by the Spirit of the Lord and of judgment and of might, to declare unto Jacob his transgression, and to Israel his sin." But such a work meant then, as it always has meant, the hatred and hostility of the wicked, the coldness and



MICAH.

HAGGAI.

MALACHI.

ZECHARIAH.

contempt of the indifferent good. With this, too, was conjoined grief for the fate of the people who seemed abandoned to their flagrant and vicious self-indulgence. Jeremiah and Zephaniah are well-nigh heart broken, for in their ears are sounding the awful trumpeting of that "day of wrath, that dreadful day," when in judgment God will appear in Zion. Thirdly, the note of hope marked clearly in the eager, expectant gazing of Daniel and Ezekiel, of Haggai, Malachi, and Zechariah. The prophets were all at heart optimists, and optimists of the right sort. Because God was in his world, the prophets were encouraged to believe in, and work for, the good, knowing that such alliance of men with God would, in the consummation of things, bring in the reign of the Messiah and that happy time when all men's good should be each man's rule, and universal peace should lie "like a shaft of light across the land, and like a lane of beams athwart the sea, through all the circle of the golden year."

We should lose part of Mr. Sargent's beautiful lesson did we not remind ourselves that the spirit of prophecy is not dead. The prophets shall have lived to little advantage if their example and the truth for which they stood are without power in

us. The evolution of religion is not yet complete. A prophet's testimony is still needed. And if we may not all have the flaming speech of Amos or Micah, the pathos of Hosea or Jeremiah, the unrivaled eloquence of Isaiah or Ezekiel, yet in our own way and with the same Divine warrant of success, we may do a prophet's work with a prophet's reward.

Men slay the prophets: fagot, rack, and cross
Make up the groaning record of the past ;
But evil's triumphs are her endless loss,
And sovereign beauty wins the soul at last.

No power can die that ever wrought for truth ;
Thereby a law of nature it became,
And lives unwithered in its sinewy youth,
When he who called it forth is but a name.

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